What Well Dressed Women Will Wear

BY Anne Rittenhouse

YOUNG AMERICAN GIRLS DRESSING MOST DISTINCTIVELY

Brilliant Gowns for All Occasions Celebrate Return of Troops and Make Styles for Their Elders

On the left is a geranium taffeta frock for dancing. One side is made of taffeta, the other of pleated chiffon. The short sleeves are of lace. A girdle of narrow ribbon is held with roses of taffeta. On the right is shown a young girl's frock of rose colored Georgette crepe, with narrow sash of Nattier blue velvet ribbon. Flounces are edged with scalloped blue chiffon.

On the left, spring suit for young girl, of tan colored covert cloth, made with new length of coat, open from neck line. It is trimmed below the waist with brass buttons. On the right is a tunic suit of red wool jersey trimmed with bands of cream colored jersey embroidered in red and black. The large hat is of cream jersey faced with red straw and trimmed with a red cord and tassel.

AMERICA has not yet found a fitting name for the girl of 16. The English call her the flapper, and the Anglo-Saxon world uses the expression, but in America it is not liked although no one has risen to put this type of young person in a niche and give her a name.

And she is quite important. She deserves a strong appellation—a quick, vibrant, significant name for her class, her type and her virility. We have buried under the cobwebs of oblivion the "sweet sixteen" phrase. But if we applied the single word "sixteen" to that gay, ecstatic, poised, self-assured, highly educated, superintelligent, adventurous class of tall, slim things that spread over the land, usually setting the pace for their mothers' fashions, it would be puerile.

No novelist has risen to classify this significant young being, who is a product of the hour and the mental movements of the world far more than any other of the humans that live on this planet.

Louisa Alcott has no twentieth century prototype. The girls she portrayed are as dead as last year's leaves. They would not arouse enthusiasm in the most simple minded school girl of this hour. Pollyanna is not descriptive of the girl as we Anglo-Saxons know her. There was an effort made to signify all young girlhood in that characterization, but that "Oh, be joyful!" attitude is treated with as much contempt by the intelligent sixteen-year-older as by the superannuated pessimist.

Sufficient Unto Themselves.

On the other hand, it is difficult to be pessimistic if one keeps close to the side of girls of that age. Their outlook on life, their faith in themselves and the world, their unbounded ability to find pleasure unaided by any one, renews youth in middle age. They are rarely asked to obey; they are constantly consulted by their mothers, and they usually take an intelligent part in the management of their home, its social environments, its financial expenditures, its ideals, and its ambitions.

It is natural that her interest in clothes should be strong, and not only strong, but usually exceedingly good. She dresses herself, as a rule, better than her mother can dress her. It is rarely that she is not consulted in every detail of her wardrobe and given the bridle when she wants to gallop down her own path.

Working downward — or upward, rather—through these pyschological phases of girlhood among the Anglo-Saxons, and especially the North Americans, one finds the reason for the establishments of many successful dressmaking houses which cater to young girls. Few of the great establishments here or abroad neglect the "flapper."

From the time she is 12 until she makes her bow to society at 18 she is catered to by houses that expend much ingenuity and brilliancy of workmanship on her especial type of clothing. Those who are familiar with Paris know that Jeanne Lanvin made the foundation of her fortune through the peculiar adaptability she exhibited in pleasing the young of two continents. The house of Cheruit also made a good share of its success by that first floor on the Place Vendome which was given over to young girls.

Two of the important financial successes in the dressmaking world of New York started with the schoolgirl. Fifth avenue houses who cater to dowagers and sensational young matrons have determined this year to place young girls' clothes in their salons. Youngsters who try to look like Mary Pickford are often used as mannequins, but they have not been a success, because the sixteen-year-older doesn't wish to look like Mary Pickford. She wouldn't be caught with curls down her back, a sweet smile and chubby legs below a short skirt.

She often produces the most extreme fashions, which her older sister and her mother copy. She is the type, one might claim, for all the fashions of the civilized world to-day. That's a sweeping statement, but just run over the gamut of fashionable clothes for the last five years and see if you don't come to that conclusion.

The bobbed hair, the short skirt, the round neck, the baby sleeves, the sashes, the buttoned-down-the-back frocks, the short coats—these are the fashions that have ruled the world and have begun in the schoolroom.

The youngster of sixteen chooses materials for her own clothes that are the same as those worn by her elders, whom she envies little these days, because she rules a world of her own that every one acknowledges. She doesn't have to dress herself up in long clothes and high headdresses and play that she is old. She has been known to grudgingly loan some of her clothes to her young married sister for an especially smart affair! She likes georgette crepe for her evening gowns and therefore she wears a good deal of it. Velveteen has found her approval, and she orders school frocks and afternoon dance frocks in it.

She has a tailored suit which was especially designed for her judgment and which she accepted. It has a coat that covers her hips, is cut on a straight line with a slight flare out at the back, and does not fasten. She ties it at the neck with a stiff cravat made of ribbon, peltry, Chinese brocade, or the material of the coat. She may have six or eight of these cravats in her bureau drawer, or she hangs them on the electric light at the side of the bureau, in imitation of her brother.

She likes her coat unfastened, for she never admits that she is cold. She has just escaped the hardening process of bare legs, bare arms and a cold nursery. The winter has no terrors for her and she dresses as she wishes, no matter what the thermometer.

Therefore she adopts this new coat for the early spring, and she usually wears it without furs. Sometimes it is battlemented at the hem, and then it is more definitely Cromwellian and after the manner of the Stuarts. She likes both edges of this coat trimmed with glittering buttons of brass or silver, and they are arranged in any way her fancy dictates.

She has taken a recent fancy to tan covert cloth, leaving the debatable velours de laine, duvetyn and other materials with a perishable nap to her elders. She has her suit in the natural color of covert cloth, and gets brilliancy by her blouse and cravat.

Runs to Colored Blouses.

White blouses do not suit her fancy; she has them in French blue, which all the regiments of young girls adore with the emotionalism they give to anything they like. She also has blouses of tomato red and jonquil yellow. They are made of heavy silk or batiste, tucked and frilled.

The "flapper" who is tall enough to carry a big fox around her neck is sure to come into possession of one. When her judgment goes against a big animal she chooses instead a coachman's collar of sealskin or squirrel, which rises about her face like the calyx of a flower and spreads downward over her shoulders, hugging them in the flat Victorian manner.

She has appropriated for her own use many accessories in peltry that the older woman has neglected. She knows the cleverness of a fur cravat and the mediaeval splendor of a fur girdle. Half her chemise frocks, and even her short full coats, have the waistline defined by a barbaric girdle of some peltry, often weighted with gold tassels and embroidered here and there with gold thread.

Fur Caps Also Popular.

"Flappers" and fur caps go together on all the streets. There are oblong turbans of squirrel with a bunch of Christmas holly at the side—a kind of glorified holly, that must have grown when Alice was in Wonderland, for its fat, stuffed berries look like plums and its sharp spiked leaves are gilded.

Again the turban may be of sealskin or kolinsky, and to make it more coquettish the youngster sees to it that the milliner flicks a spiked, arrogant bow of horizon-blue velvet ribbon on one side. There is nothing heavy about the bow; it would be insignificant if it were not for its arrogance.

She does not disdain the flat hat, especially if she is in the Southern exodus. She wears immense pancakes of straw and jersey or straw and georgette crepe mixed, but she keeps them from looking too much like the hats worn by Louisa Alcott's heroines; she embroiders them with colored wool to show that she knows what is what in the fashion of the hour.

Again she takes the Blue Devil beret as one of the many things out of her beloved France—for the "flapper" has gone in head over heels for France during the great war and the French soldier has taken the place of the matinee idol. The milliner makes this beret for her in straw or velveteen, and she runs a band of red ribbon embroidered in gold at the edge, to keep in the spirit of victory and trumpeting colors.

Bound to Have Victory Clothes.

And, by the way, the "flappers" have no idea of being left out of the procession of those wearing Victory clothes. They have no shrinking about their costumery and what it signifies; they are instinctively psychological, and they wish to proclaim the side they took in the war by every manner of clothes that the dressmakers and milliners have thrown into the fashions to proclaim the day of peace.

So the "flapper" wears red—bright, glowing, triumphant red. She doesn't hesitate a second in choosing several garments of it. She is not weighted down by the anxieties of her elders that certain colors must be taboo because age is drawing a map on the face.

The dressmakers have given her scarlet tunics of woollen jersey, which she wears to school under a short or a long coat. Against the scarlet surface are bands of cream colored jersey vividly embroidered in red and black. One feels as though a trumpet were preceding a youngster in one of these frocks, and it gives one a sense of victory, and of Youth!

The hat that the milliner has matched to the dressmaker's Victory frock is of cream colored jersey with a big soft crown. The brim is faced with red straw, and there is a twisted red cord and tassel that looks as though it had been lifted from the shoulders of some staff officer. It certainly would be pilfered from the officer if the "flapper" had a chance to get at it, for she has taken the war so to heart, and has worked so hard in it, that she embraces all the fighters under the word "hero."

She begs or pilfers bits of their uniforms whenever she can, and you see her running her machine, or skating on ice covered ponds in the country, or rushing late to school, with these bits of the allied uniforms scattered over her.

Shines at the Dance.

Of course she dances. She does this far better than any other member of her sex. She smiles contemptuously when her grandmother tries to imitate her, for she knows that the thing she does superlatively well is syncopated dancing. She dresses for the part. There are vast opportunities for her gowns. She may not be allowed to go to dances small and early, except on Friday and Saturday evenings; but she belongs to three or four dancing classes that meet in the afternoon, and in New York, as well as other great centres, there are exclusive evening classes arranged for just her pleasure.

If she is rich she pays $150 for each of her dance frocks, for even a casual observer would see that there is not a dollar's worth of difference between the making of her gown and that for her mother. The finest of satins are used, the best of tulle, the softest of taffetas. Metallic laces and tissues are omitted in the wardrobe of a well dressed youngster. Heavy embroidery is taboo.

The chemise frock, a certain modification of an eighteenth century court gown, and much that is mediæval and Babylonian in contour are especially chosen for her evening costumery. She avoids purple and black, but she mixes up in her wardrobe bright pink, Nattier blue, jonquil yellow, white, cream and scarlet.

Roses for Dance Gowns.

The dressmakers offer her a new mixture of pink and blue which has come down from the Dresden shepherdesses. They have brought back roses by the thousands for her dance gowns. Some of them are rococo, with their hardened, glittering surface and gilded leaves, which make a piquant contrast to her youth. Others are of satin, taffeta, with velvet petals. These roses garland her bodices, they form her sleeves in row after row placed upon tulle, spreading between elbow and shoulder, and sometimes they garland the armhole like hoops.

A French designer has brought back the scalloped trimming of another era, and it has been received in this country with appreciation. So the "flapper" wears a dance gown of ruffles, each edged with its band of colored scallops, and there is a sash to match.

If one runs through the departments dedicated to the young girl's service it would seem that she is the preeminent person of the hour, for whom the Victory clothes are designed. And why not?

There are over a million young boys who are said to have saved the world for democracy, and who are arriving home covered with crosses and glory, to dance, to dine, and to make love to the "flapper." She knows her power to-day, and she is dressing up to it.

Early spring hat for a youngster, made of navy blue straw, flaring high in front. The head band is of red ribbon edged with gold.

Frock for South with a skirt of pale blue taffeta and a blouse of blue mousseline de soie trimmed with bands of embroidery. Blouse and skirt are edged with tiny balls of embroidered taffeta. Hat of blue straw with black velvet band and edges overcast with black wool thread.

How Words for Clothes Grew

SOME of the new tassels are made with cords on which are hung real pebbles, colored to match the cords. Perhaps this is a revival of the original tassel, which apparently was made always from pebbles or bones or something of that sort, for the word tassel comes from the Latin and means knucklebones. Among the early Romans this form of clothes decoration apparently was first made from such primitive devices.

Do you know that chenille came from the French word meaning caterpillar? And, by the way, if you had to devise a name for this form of trimming could you devise one more realistic?

If one could only know the origin of all the many words we use in our daily talk one would know much of the history of dress. Many of our most recently adopted clothes words come from France, but five hundred years ago dress terms more usually came from Italy, then the mecca of fashion. Hence velvet came from "velluto," the Italian word to indicate shaggy. And "camesole," which has recently been revived from an earlier English usage, came from the Italian diminutive of chemise.

The Orient has also contributed its share to clothes words, and our pajama—or pyjamas, as it is almost always spelled in France—comes from the Hindu "paejama," which literally means "leg garment." This word was first introduced into current English through the British occupation of India, where the single nether portion was the usual house garment for men. In colder climates, of course, the jacket was indispensable, and hence the term pajamas is now generally accepted for the complete outfit.

If we had no other indication to show our enormous debt to Japan for clothes inspiration of late years, the frequency with which we use the word kimono would suffice, for that is a direct borrowing from the Japanese language to indicate a national costume for both men and women.

Dozens and dozens of clothes terms there are that indicate the evolution of clothes among our ancestors. Petticoat, which has been used as a not very respectful synonym for women in general, was a garment for men originally, and was the undercoat worn beneath the heavier overcoat. It was fairly long, and eventually the word came to be applied to the garments that evolved from this "petti," or small coat.

Any one interested in the history of dress might find amusement for many an idle hour simply in searching out the meanings of many of the words used by dressmakers and haberdashers. Take the simple word corset. You will find that it is a diminutive of "corse," or body—a word which we still have in corpse and corps. And it was early used in the plural, as we do now, first to indicate an entire garment, and then merely the stay portion of such a garment. Similarly "bodice," which has recently been revived as a substitute for the overworked "waist," is merely a plural for body, the term originally being "a pair of bodies."

LACE IN FULL VOGUE AGAIN

ARE you aware of the fact that we are about to experience a revival of interest in lace?

Doubtless this has been brought about in part by the men and women whose business interests centre in the sale of lace. Moreover, it is again possible to get laces that were unavailable during the war. The revival of lace will mean that numerous women of Europe will have a means of earning a living; that we can help them to help themselves during reconstruction.

Real laces will be especially in demand, and this is in keeping with the revival of interest in all hand wrought fabrics and tissues. But we are not going to be content with the old time mode of applying lace, which was too often stiff and prim.

Designers are going back to the lavish method of the Renaissance, when ecclesiastics combined the most costly of lace with the most gorgeous of embroideries and silks in the vestments worn on great festivals, and to the great court ladies of those days, who vied with the great prelates in their lavish use of lace and brilliant fabrics.

The prediction is made that this spring will see a revival of the sort of lace trimmed batiste or lawn frocks that we used to regard as indispensable to every woman's wardrobe. If made by hand they require days and days of work, and if by machine actually miles of fine stitching. There are yards and yards, moreover, of lace insertion, and sometimes innumerable tucks. The result is a frock that is perennially fresh, for if it is not made to go in the tub, it is at least capable of being cleaned repeatedly.

Colored sheer cotton fabrics are used in the advance models for frocks and blouses, and instead of using white lace on these many of them show Valenciennes that has been tinted to match the fabric with which it is used.

Although in most of the new frocks for evening and afternoon wear there is a decided lack of lace or other trimming to relieve the severity of the line at the neck, still it is said that this spring we will enjoy a revival of dainty neck laces—neck accessories, frills and jabots and ruffles. They will be worn with suits and day frocks, and will make use of a lavish amount of beautiful laces.

Timely Hints for Dance Gowns

ALTHOUGH there are attractive new dance frocks made in pastel shades and what we used to call evening shades to indicate delicate flower-petal shades, still there are many frocks made in vivid brilliant shades and in combinations of such shades.

Why not combine rose panne velvet and black velvet with a touch of black tulle? A prominent dressmaker made an attractive dance frock of this combination for one of her young patrons, and though it may seem more appropriate for a young matron than for a debutante, the fact is that it is a combination that proves extremely attractive when worn by the very young dancer.

Another interesting color combination shown by the same designer was one of green satin and wistaria with tulle of both colors.

Rainbow frocks that combine a medley of brilliant colors are attractive, and not so well launched as to be too usual. The rainbow frock solves the question: "What is the victory color?" For in the rainbow dress we can combine the various colors that have been suggested, and hence be sure of getting the right one. One delightful rainbow frock included purple, blue and gold, green, black, rose and henna; yet there was nothing unrestricted or barbaric in the effect. Any young woman with a good eye for combining contrasting colors ought to be able to design a rainbow dancing frock that would be original and attractive.

While the sleeveless evening frock is still seen, many of the French models designed for less formal evening occasions show sleeves that terminate only an inch or so above the elbow, leaving a line that is very becoming to the young woman with well shaped, well rounded elbows; but one that had better not be attempted by the woman with overdeveloped elbows or by the woman with bony arms.

Some brilliant evening frocks are still made of black, which combines extremely well with metallic cloth or metallic lace. A French frock that would be worth studying shows an underskirt of silver jersey finished at the bottom with a narrow fringe. At either side there are two gathered panels of black velvet that extend to the bottom of the underskirt. The bodice is a fairly deep neck, with the new sleeves that end just above the elbow, and at both neck and sleeves the velvet comes in direct line with the skin, unrelieved by tulle or lace.

WHY SOCIETY WOMEN WASH THEIR OWN HAIR

They do, not because it is a fad, but because they wish to obtain the greatest possible hair beauty and be sure they are not using anything harmful. They have found that in washing the hair it is never wise to use a makeshift, but is always advisable to use a preparation made for shampooing only. Many of our friends say they get the best results from a simple home-made canthrox mixture. You can use this at a cost of about 3 cents a shampoo by getting some canthrox from your druggist and dissolving a teaspoonful in a cup of hot water. This makes enough shampoo liquid to apply to all the hair instead of just the top of the head, as with most preparations. Dandruff, excess oil and dirt are dissolved and entirely disappear in the rinsing water. Your hair will be so fluffy that it will look much heavier than it is. Its luster and softness will also delight you.—Adv.